

REMARKS

This is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed September 17, 2007. At the time of the Final Office Action, Claims 1-35 were pending in this Application. Claims 1-35 were rejected. Claims 1 and 23 have been amended to further define various features of Applicant's invention. Claims 2, 15, and 21 have been withdrawn. Claims 16-19 and 30-33 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 7 and 9 were previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 23-34 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicant amends Claim 23 to overcome these rejections and respectfully requests full allowance of Claim 23 as amended.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-14, 20-22 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,946,467 issued to Ohi et al. ("Ohi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,045,571 issued to Hill et al. ("Hill").

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohi in view of Hill, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,019,093 issued to Kaplan et al. ("Kaplan").

Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohi in view of Hill, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,047,533 issued to Perciaccante et al. ("Perciaccante").

Claims 23-29 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohi in view of Hill, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,731,084 issued to Dunn et al. ("Dunn").

Claims 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohi in view of Hill and Dunn, and further in view of Perciaccante. Applicant respectfully traverses and submits the cited art combinations, even if proper, which Applicant does not concede, does not render the claimed embodiment of the invention obvious.

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 23 to further define what is claimed. Claims 1 and 23, as amended, describe a suture strand comprising a core and a cover surround the core, wherein the core is comprised of a sub-core and an outer ring. More particularly, the sub-core comprises a plurality of core fibers arranged in a twisted bundle, and the outer ring comprises a plurality of core fibers arranged to form a woven annular braid. Applicant respectfully submits that none of the referenced cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, disclose all of the elements described in amended claims 1 and 23. As such, claims 1 and 23 as amended are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.

New claims 36-38 have been added to further define the present invention.

Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

Applicants enclose a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) Transmittal, and hereby authorized the Commissioner to charge \$810 to Deposit Account No. 50-0359 of ArthroCare Corporation.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims.

Applicant believes there are no further fees due at this time, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees necessary or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0359 of ArthroCare Corporation in order to effectuate this filing.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicant's attorney at 512.358.5925.

Respectfully submitted
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Date: 1/15/08

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Enclosure: 1) Request for Continued Examination (RCE) transmittal.